THE POETRY REVIEW

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MOONLIGHT

RACHEL ANNAND TAYLOR

Softly I walk, alone, alone,
  Now it is pale moonlight,
For my sweet friends long since are gone,
  And hidden out of sight.

My garden sighs with scent, alack!
  Even in the cold moonlight.
But all her violets are black,
  And all her roses white.

CHANT FOR TILLERS

WILFRID THORLEY

God of the swollen clouds that move
  Lit by the sun or lidding his great eye,
    Now let the favour of their boon fall down
And drench our furrows.

All of our earth is barren clod,
  And sinews vainly labour unless thou,
    Lord of the cornfield and the orchard croft,
Bestow thy showers.

We have not stinted of our toil,
  Nor hankered for full flagons at noonday
    With dalliance of song. Our strength we gave;
So be thou lavish.

Forgive us our faint hours of hope,
  The faltering hands of those that doubted thee,
    The slanderers that sullied thy renown
With lying omens.

These were but few; the many toiled
  With brave hearts trusting thy benevolence,
    Turning the soil and casting in the groove
The seed of plenty.

Let fall the boon, and we will fend
  Against the weevil in the swelling grain
    And watch the green blade spiring till it glows
In golden harvest.

Thee in the fading light of eve
  We will remember in our orisons,
    When all thy gentle dews like gems inlay
The spider's spangle.

THE LADDER

WILFRID GIBSON

She found him at the ladder-foot
Beside the half-built stack,
Dead, with a broken back:

And, when they'd buried him, she took
His own sharp-bladed axe
And hewed with angry thwacks

The ladder that had caused his death
To bits and madly flung
Into the fire each rung;

While in the crackle and the flare
Her spirit sought relief
From its fierce frenzied grief:

And only when 'twas burned to ash
She sank with a low moan
Asleep by the hearthstone.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

HERBERT PALMER

I think, in all I said and did
  Since Time deprived my veins of youth—
But dim the dial; how Time seems hid!—
  I have sought to serve and follow Truth.

Yet sometimes she has turned my feet—
  By fault of mischief in my blood—
Down ruthless-lane or little-street,
  Or urged me on Wrath's bitter flood.

But still the bulk of Good remains:
  I have not bowed the knee to Pride,
Nor spilt Truth's essence to the drains.
  Nor let the Crooked be my guide.

And if in whipped infirmity
  Delusion sometimes walked before,
More oft I saw, as few can see,
  And pierced the adamantine door.

And though at times Truth seemed a fight
  With twilight imps, more worth disdain,
Often the quarrel was with Night—
  The sure allies of death and bane.

Yet dark frustration fogged her power,
  Not wide enough were spread my beams;
Men drew a veil on many an hour
  Which God had furnished in my dreams.

Strange loneliness has been my lot,
  Deep in my heart resentment's stone.
Something of wrong must be forgot,
  For all are wronged who walk alone.

WINTER FEAR

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

Bitter the wind blows from the hill,
    Night falls;
  Thin, frozen, shrill
From the stark field an unseen plover calls
With the far-heard hopeless cry of a drowning soul.

How is it with you, my love, whom the blind winds roll
  In a ship that shudders and sheers,
Plunging between the world's two hemispheres?

VALLE CRUCIS

JOHN REDWOOD ANDERSON

Tragwyddol yw'm serch atat ti!
—CEIRIOG.

There is no cross in Valle Crucis now:
in the grey Cistercian Abbey is neither altar nor cross;
in those bare ruined choirs only the sweet birds sing;
only the wind blows through ghostly pipes, and no priest intones.

All lies bare and ruined, since the barbarian murderer-king
—Defender of the Faith—so grievously offended against it:
truly, the thieves once driven out of the Temple here took their revenge!
a robber from his grey sanctuary drove out Christ and his cross.

All lies opened and ruined: the grass grows tufted between the stones,
tufted, like stiff upstanding hairs, along the tops of the walls:
derelict and dishonoured it stands! Derelict and dishonoured,
in the chancel lie, side by side, six broken and battered tombs.

And in one of these derelict tombs lie the bones of Iolo Goch,
the great Bard of the great Glyndŵr, the last saviour of Wales;
and in another—O, breathe her name softly!—
lie the white bones of Princess Myfanwy of Dinas Brân.

O Myfanwy, Princess Myfanwy, how lovely you were!
How the winds of the east over Lloegr, of the west over Gwynedd,
westward and eastward sweeping, high and wild over Dinas Brân,
one to the sunset, one to the sunrise, bore, crying aloud, the wound of your beauty!

O Princess Myfanwy, how lovely you were!
Like a flame of fire was your hair, like sunlight flashing on polished bronze;
how magical-blue were your sorceress-eyes! how secret, the thin curved red of your lips!
and the long, long fingers of your two white hands touched the harp-strings of madness and death!

Iolo Goch is dead, and his bones lie here buried;
Owain Glyndŵr is dead, and none knows where his bones
may lie;
Myfanwy, lovely Myfanwy, is dead—and lovely no more . . .
and there is no cross in Valle Crucis now.

REACHES OF THE YARE

R. H. MOTTRAM

Lovelier yet, as we discover,
Winds the river from Barford Mill,
Broadens the valley by Colney tower,
Deepens the water under the hill.

Yellow lily drowned on its stalk is
Hidden in sky-reflecting spots,
Leopard-like marks on lilac orchis,
Little enamelled forget-me-nots.

Brilliant the tint of the marshland flowers
None can ravish, remotely fair,
Blush rose inaccessible bowers,
Weed and reed that enchant the air.

Blue the ripple by Earlham splendours,
Chanting low is Cringleford weir,
Sunshine and shadow God shall send us,
Beauty's eternal. Eternity's here.

CAMBRIDGE POST-WAR
(1920)

SIR SHANE LESLIE, Bt.

Flow for them, river of ancient delight,
Splashed by the rowers, yet flashing the thought
Of all spirits returning to Granta and Cam
From Tigris and Somme: wherever they fought!

Flower and flutter to blossom and leaf,
All ye trees on the Cambridge Backs:
For the spirits, who rest in your shadows,
Have thrown away flesh with their packs.

Some corner, though covered by stone or by sand,
Wherever a Gownsman's body hath been:
There blindly some dust out of England
Remembers the beauty of Cambridge unseen.

Strike solemn, more solemn than ever of old,
O curfew of evening from Mary the Great,
From far and beyond the old Fenland
Call in the dead men who are wandering late.

GROWING OLD IN APRIL

FRANCES CORNFORD

Across the dew-gray cuckoo-flowered grass
The cuckoo himself went by:
Among the maze of green I missed, Alas,
That ever-happy cry;
Yet I'm not sad because I hardly hear
His old da Capo part,
But that I still through this perfection bear
A time-entangled heart.

COMPENSATION

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

Grief is a state we lose when loss
Ceases to be an hourly cross,
For in man's compensation hours
Of wintry dolour break in flowers.

Grief changes with the particles
And bloodthreads in the living flesh;
Nought can perpetuate those cells
That in each moment mould afresh.

The drawn lip and the downcast eye
Bear witness to a memory,
But food and drink and loving take
The edge off grief for living's sake.

Else would we be in heart and brain
Broken with sorrow from our birth.
So, lovers, see beyond your pain
The ribald visage of the earth.

YOUTH CONSUMPTIVE

HUW MENAI

They led him up the Garden Path
To bask in Hope's white beams,
Encouraged him with lime and lath
To build a world of dreams.

And maybe it was well to die
Ere summer at the close
Showed him the sorrowful greenfly
Corruption of the rose.

RECOGNITION

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN

Le génie c'est le talent des hommes morts

Oh, how we love you now that you are dead,
And how magnificently each verse sings!
It is not the intelligence mind brings
To such creations that has power to shed
That light, but union, yes, of heart and head,
Transparent in your least imaginings,
Which yields them impact and celestial wings
To reach demesnes by poets coveted.

To think that our neglect has made you so,
That more encouragement might just have dimmed

Your cornucopia of impassioned fire,
That your great *yes* is due to our small *no*
That pain engendered the pure peace you hymned:
This thought can both enhearten and inspire.

CITIES LIKE BRIDES

WILFRED CHILDE

Cities like brides expect the April sun—
  Cities worn down by Time's slow pressure die
  And pass, laden with many a century,
Into the deep mists of oblivion.

Some are brow-crowned with roses of pure gold,
  Their pale hands hold forth lilies of gold and pearl;
  Some bathe in tragic ghosts, whose clouds upcurl
About them, terrible, war-scarred and old.

Some are like witches who round cauldrons steaming
  Watch the thick smoke rise from a sooty broth;
  The robes of some are fretted by rust and moth,
Yet in their hair sad ancient gems lie dreaming.

Some are not, but with Ilium and with Tyre
  Sleep an eternal sleep. Some glow with Spring.
  Some wait the final Coming of their King,
Consumed with life and wasted by desire . . .

A VISION OF SCOTLAND

HUGH MACDIARMID

I see my Scotland now, a puzzle
Passing the normal of her sex, going erect
Unscathed through fire, keeping her virtue
Where temptation works with violence, walking bravely,
Offering loyalty and demanding respect.

Every now and again in a girl like you,
Even in the streets of Glasgow or Dundee,
She throws her headsquare off and a mass

Of authentic flaxen hair is revealed,
Fine spun as newly-retted fibres
On a sunlit Irish bleaching field.

PROTEUS SOLILOQUIZES

GERALD BULLETT

Into your home, to find a fallen crumb,
Mousing my way on velvet feet I come.

Brilliant as flame, sleek as water's flow
I, panther, sinuously come and go.

Serpent or toad or cold chameleon,
I seek my swamp, or bake me in the sun,

Or blithely sing, a blackbird on the bough,
Not past nor future time, but here and now.

Rooted in dark, beyond sound or sight,
I lift my leafy branches to the light.

I am earth, air, fire, water, rising sap.
Nothing contains me. I escape your trap.

IN THE GARDEN AT BRAMLEY

L. AARONSON

What morning meant, ripening the dew,
Evening said again in the sad light;
But, though I felt the meaning coming through,
Somehow I missed its harvest for the night.

The garden apples were a green fire,
Withdrawn to lamp their inward sleep.
The woodland elms were dark with night's desire,
The skies estranged with starry trysts to keep.

But I had no good hiding-place
Or power of loss or tryst, away,
Without a fear, into the infinite space
Of dream and seed and star and future day.

YOU, AIRMAN

THOMAS MOULT

Wing'd traveller, your strong face can feel
What men had never touched; the air
By Titans breathed. Such storms you hear,
Such dazzle of stars you see, flying there,
Would make a wingless mortal reel!

Now you know more of space above
Than the high gods have known . . . And yet
Your heart on earthborn things is set,
The human things that none forget:
A child at play, a woman's love.

"CHINESE" POEM

(1920)

RUTH PITTER

The birds fly over the rice-field,
(Righteousness flies over riches).
They go to the uttermost marshes
Where only the wild rice grows;
Poor and light in the ear,
Yet that is the food they desire—
The hard-earned morsel of poverty
Far away, in a place of peace.

I CANNOT AND I MUST

P. D. CUMMINS

I cannot, cannot, cannot, and I must:
I must find strength in weakness to expend
In this, the last, lost battle, and distrust
The seeming victor and the seeming end.
Against all reason I must stand alone
Within destruction's circle coldly planned,
And build up brick on brick and stone on stone
With my slow-crawling, mutilated hand.
I cannot, cannot, cannot, and I must:
I must with final, strangling breath deny
The answer scrawled so glibly in the dust,
I must outlast the failing, craven I.
I cannot and I must. How else to find
An outlet from this impasse of the mind?

ADDER'S TONGUE

(To Andrew Young)

STANLEY SNAITH

Pouring one shadow from the slanting ray
We went at evening, ankle deep in May,
On expedition to find a rumoured fern
Whose Moses-hearted seed had come to learn
Our delicate southern ways and be reborn.

Knowing itself for an unlicensed rover,
It throve consentingly with dock and clover;
And dusk was falling when we stooped to uncover
That crumbling olive prong, less fern than flower,
Lapped with leaf against the cooling hour.

Whether one saw it as a visitant
That privateered the wind, or merely a plant
Rich in the ancient simplicity of the ground,
Not thence came the fulfilment and the bond:
The meed was in the finding, not the found.

True kingdoms are not taken with fife and drum,
And the earth's purest intimations come
When a hunger buried within us, long denied,
Sheds the felicity of the unsatisfied
And takes the prosaic moment for its bride.

TELEGRAPH WIRES

MORCHARD BISHOP

Through the grey silence of the winter day
The close-spaced wires stretch, untenanted,
A noteless stave no instrument can play,
A melody unheard, a tune unread;

But, as the twilight falls, the notes appear:
The minim birds assemble, quiet eve
Sets crotchet sparrows clustering everywhere,
While ruffled starlings mark the semibreve;

Till hark! the music rises as the light,
Fading, sets brighter notes within those bars;
And pealing through the organ-loft of night
Ring clear the crashing octaves of the stars.

LONDON NOCTURNE

RANDALL SWINGLER

With the blue of autumn in the boughs like a ghostly bloom
And a dying memory clouding the waters of the mind
On a Sunday evening I look over London's loom
Of coloured vapours like patterns of oil on a pond

Musing on the strange comfort of melancholy
When loss is known at last to be irrecoverable
And grief is the settled temper of the body.
The madness of the happy in parable!

NIGHT VOYAGE

From the German of

HEINRICH HEINE

Translated by

NORMAN CAMERON

The sea was high, the half-moon peeped
Through dark clouds timidly,
And, as we mounted on the skiff,
Our company numbered three.

The water splashed to the beat of the oar
With dull monotony;
White-crested waves came surging up
And spattered us all three.

She stood on the skiff, so slim, so pale,
And so unflinchingly,
Like a marble statue from foreign lands,
Diana's image, she.

And now the moon is entirely hid,
The wind blows cold and dree;
High, of a sudden, above our heads
A cry rings piercingly.

'Twas the cry of a white and spectral gull:
Like a warning prophecy
It rang, that sinister, evil cry,
And we were afraid, all three.

Am I a-fevered? Is yonder a ghost?
Or some midnight phantasy?
Am I mocked by a dream? Ah, what a dream,
What ghastly buffoonery!

Ghastly buffoonery! I dream
That salvation comes through Me:
That 'tis I who bear the heavy Cross
With steadfast loyalty.

Poor Beauty, she is sore distressed:
'Tis I who shall set her free
From shame and sin, from pain and want
And the world's obscenity.

Beauty distressed, ah, do not shrink
From this bitter pharmacy:
'Tis I myself who award thee death,
Though my heart shall die with thee.

Ah, buffoonery, cruel dream,
Madness and lunacy!
The night's agape, the ocean shrieks—
O God, ah, succour me!

Ah, succour me, all-merciful God!
What is't that falls in the sea?
Oh, hear, oh, hear, all-merciful God,
Adonai, hear my plea!

The sun arose, we put for land;
There was blossom on every tree!
And as we descended from the skiff,
Two were our company.

RAPALLO

BERNARD GUTTERIDGE

Their anger gone, these summer-soft
And gelded hills lean emptily down
To embrace a haze blue sheltered sea
Frilled gaily with its blaze of tents and bathers.

The hills wear all their age-old lace
Of grey-green olive trees. The stunted, dark green
Dwarfs of vines make up to their slender trunks.
Down on the front we drink beside the palms
(Their roots a carved-out thousand clambering worms).

Then just for me the warming brilliant coast
Suddenly jerks alive and flames its sun,
Hurls its rocks of mountains, stretches its fruiting trees,
To sparkle in your brown eyes and to move
All its southern beauty about your burning body.

HORACE: BOOK TWO, FROM ODE ONE

G. S. FRASER

Strife in Metellus' year first stirred!
Its grounds, its gropings, how it grew,
The share of luck, of leading men,
Of ominous alliance,

Of arms still caked with crying blood—
A task how like a gambler's throw!—
You trace; and treading tricky ash
May start on hidden embers . . .

Even now, the angry trumpets snarl—
You burst my ears!—the clarion shrills,
Bright armour scares and dazzles both
Horsemen and rearing horses,

I seem to hear the shouting chiefs
Dusty with no ignoble dust
And all the earth beside cast down
Except dire Cato's courage!

Juno and gods of Africa,
Often rebuffed, now bring the killed
Descendants of the men who won
To soothe Jugurtha's spirit!

Where does a soil lie not made rich
With Latian blood? To impious war
Far graves are witness, and the Mede
Has heard Hesperia falling.

What pool or stream laps not the gloom
Of combat? With our Daunian deaths
What sea is not discoloured, what
Coast for our blood still clamours?

Oh, not the Cean dirge once more!
Strayed Muse, desert not all delights!
With me in some Dionean cave
Try for a happier measure!

MURDER

(On a theme of M. Mauriac)

WRENNE JARMAN

The bill is pasted up outside the jail
  For all to know that justice is fulfilled.
  Its blob disturbs me, for I too have killed:
The faces of my victims gleam as pale.

Long, long ago, there was the child that sought
  My arm, at school—and needed it, God knew.
  I see her bright, defenceless. Her I slew.
There was the woman loneliness had taught,
Who saw from me Hope's phoenix rearise.
  I slaughtered her . . . The man who smiled on me
    And did not see how like I was to Cain—
With bored indifference I put out his eyes.

  That one, and that . . . I cannot count my slain.
    Yet since there are no corpses, I go free.

FORMAL ODE

Remembering the Coronation of
M. P. Shiel

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

Therefore for islands, and for the dispossessed,
Because the crowns of laurel are functional
    Against Heaven's lightning only;
    Because, now, the poor poets

Uncoronetted, must feel the world's weather:—
We will render thanks, if, for once, of rhetoric
    A king, with uncanonical
    Blessing of bishops, and boys

In white exotic blossoms crowned, took trumps
From our widowed Empress of the tartan tea-cloths;
    And that Black Widow, whose
    Drab web would choke the Muse.

W. H. DAVIES AND EDWARD THOMAS, 1905-1907

LAWRENCE W. HOCKEY

The Soul's Destroyer and Other Poems, the first book of W. H. Davies, was published, at the author's expense, in March, 1905. At first, it was a failure; for, though thirty copies were sent out for review, only two notices appeared, these being slight and disappointing. The book did not sell. Davies had no job and lived, in a common lodging-house, on his inherited income of eight shillings a week, but this small sum was mortgaged until the end of the year to pay the publication expenses. Hence, Davies must sell the book—an edition of two-hundred-and-fifty copies had been printed —for he was almost destitute. In this connection, he wrote:

> Weeks and weeks went by and, having now started to drink, and losing control of my will in this disappointment, I had come down to my last ten shillings, and had a good seven months to go before my money was again due. First of all I had serious thoughts of destroying this work—the whole two hundred and odd copies, which were under lock and key in my room, and to then set to work carefully on new matter, and, when my income was again due, to again mortgage it in another attempt . . . I thought with some bitterness of having to go on tramp again, and it was in one of these bitter moments that I swore a great oath that these copies, good or bad, should maintain me until the end of the year. For I would distribute these books here and there, sending them to successful people, and they would probably pay for their copies, perhaps not so much for what merit they might think the work contained, as for the sake of circumstances. This idea no sooner possessed me than I began preparing for its execution.

Accordingly, obtaining names and addresses from *Who's Who*, the 'prentice poet started sending out his books to various prominent people, requesting them to purchase. After disposing of about sixty books in this way, "some of these well-known people receiving the book as an unacknowledged gift, and others quickly forwarding the price," he sent a copy to G. Bernard Shaw. The accompanying letter asked Mr. Shaw if he required a half-crown book of verses; and, if so, would he please send the author the half-crown; if not, would he return the book. Mr Shaw opened the book and "perceived that the author was a real poet".

The outcome was that Mr. Shaw sent Davies the price of eight copies of *The Soul's Destroyer*, telling him to send the other seven copies "to certain writers of literary columns whose names and addresses" were supplied by G.B.S.

Davies wrote his letter to G.B.S. probably in June, 1905. Mr. Shaw was the first to realise that Davies was a genuine poet, but A. St. John Adcock, to whom a copy had also been sent, quickly followed; and he arranged a meeting with Davies and, hearing from him of his vagabond years, said:

> If I merely review your book it will not sell a dozen copies, but if you will let me combine with a review an absolutely frank narrative of your career I have an idea we can rouse public interest to some purpose.

Davies agreed, and the result was a long and discerning article in *The Daily Mail*, which set him on the way to literary fame. Edward Thomas also wrote a "stirring" review for *The Daily Chronicle*, and he and Davies became firm friends. Other prominent critics praised *The Soul's Destroyer*, and favourable notices appeared in leading newspapers and literary magazines. In his humility, Davies was amazed and bewildered by his good fortune, considering himself lucky to have achieved such success; for, of this experience, he wrote:

> It was all like a dream. In my most conceited moments I had not expected such an amount of praise . . . until one wave came stronger than the others and threw me breathless of all conceit, for I felt myself unworthy of it, and of the wonderful sea on which I had embarked.

Recognition followed, and a number of famous people entered into correspondence; but Davies was still desperately poor and continued his lodging-house life, though he was "accorded certain privileges" and had "greater facilities for reading and writing", one of these being the right to borrow books from the public library.

In August, 1905, Davies had got into touch with J. B. Pinker, the literary agent, who took charge of his affairs, disposing of the remainder of the first edition of *The Soul's Destroyer* and trying to place a new collection of poems with a publisher. The last copies of the edition soon sold out, many of the books bringing, according to St. John Adcock, half a guinea and a guinea each; yet, in a letter to Ernest Rhys, concerning *The Soul's Destroyer*, the poet wrote:

> The only benefit I have received from the publication of my book is a little praise, with the power to go in debt, which I have taken advantage of. Of course, the edition was so small, the book was so large, and I foolishly made away with such a number of copies; and these three reasons made it just possible, and no more, to recover my own expenses. However, I am quite satisfied with the result, and hope to do better in the future.

Towards the end of October, 1905, Davies returned to Newport, his home town, where he hoped to settle down to write; but his plans miscarried and early in January, 1906, he returned to the lodging-house in London to continue his struggle for livelihood and fame.

Meanwhile, J. B. Pinker was endeavouring to place the new collection

of poems; but Davies was greatly disappointed and considerably distressed when he received, from John Lane, the publisher, the following letter, dated 24th January, 1906:

> I had made up my mind to accept your MS. until I discovered by the merest chance that it was sent to me through an agent during my absence, although I wrote to you some months ago asking you if I might be allowed to see it. I never have any dealings with agents, and return the MS.

It was now that Edward Thomas, ever generous, became Davies's guide, counsellor and friend, and spent time, effort and money in looking after his literary interests, social contacts and physical well-being; for, though too poor to give Davies adequate financial assistance, he did everything in his power to help him, contributing what he could hardly afford from his own small earnings, whilst interesting influential friends, like Edward Garnett and W. H. Hudson, in the man and his work. A letter, written by Thomas to Gordon Bottomley, from The Weald and dated 24th January, 1906, largely reveals the position. With reference to Davies, Thomas wrote:

> Yesterday he was to have taken possession of part of my cottage—for he is very poor and being one-legged and I think a poet he finds work at a trade impossible. But unluckily I was given notice to leave my cottage at the end of this week and I had suddenly to put him off . . . It was sad that my worst bit of poverty should come when he most needed help, and when all I could send him was little more than enough for his fare to London. I wonder what you will think of his best things. I think he has immortal moments. By the way, I sometimes give him books; if you have any spare copies of even the most elementary poetry I should be glad to transmit them. When I saw him he had only a 6d. *Wordsworth* and a *Shelley*—which it must have been fearful to read by the light of a coke fire—and one or two strange miscellanies and gifts (of their own works!) from reviewers (not from me, I assure you). I have given him a *Wordsworth*, a *Sturge Moore*, and I forget what else; I am taking him a *Byron* and a *Cowper*.

Realising that Davies could not live by poetry alone, Edward Thomas shortly afterwards proved his friendship by obtaining for him a small cottage, known as Stidulph's Cottage, in Egg Pie Lane, in the Weald of Kent, near Sevenoaks. The poet took possession in February, 1906, and was able to live on his weekly income of eight shillings, because his rent, light and coal were accounted for by Thomas and some friends. The cottage, which was two meadows away from Else's Farm where Thomas lived, was very barely furnished, and the meagre necessities—a camp bed, bedding, table, chair, cupboard, lamp and a few crocks and cooking utensils—were supplied by Helen and Edward Thomas. Davies was very short of bedclothes and suffered considerably because of this; for he wrote:

I know well that a man of genius has shivered on a winter's night in a bed with insufficient clothing, in spite of using all his wearing apparel.

Yet, during the next few years, living on his own in the midst of lovely country, Davies had the opportunity to write in peace and quiet, and worked so effectively that he produced a number of books, both poetry and prose. But at first Davies could hardly believe that this tranquil life would last, as he revealed in his poem, *The Calm*, written soon after he left London:

A bird sings on yon apple bough,
And bees are humming near; and now
I think of my tempestuous past,
And wonder if these joys will last.
After a storm of many years,
There comes this calm to lay my fears.
In vain it comes: an anxious eye
Looks for a sign in every sky
Of tempest; for it cannot be,
Methinks, that peace will stay with me.

The calm remained, however; yet, for a few more years, Davies was to suffer poverty and hardship, and had, as he wrote, "all the disadvantage of fame without having the least assistance from fortune"; and was so shabby in appearance that beggars on the road used to mistake him for a fellow-tramp. Of this period and the succeeding few years we are given a clue to his mode of life in his novel, *A Weak Woman*, when the pedlar poet says:

I gave up peddling as soon as my first book was published and was so well praised, thinking that I could surely manage to live by writing. I did not expect to make a good living, by any means, but thought to live as well as a common unskilled labourer, on a pound a week. But I soon found that although critics praised my poems in a book, editors were not very eager to accept them as contributions. Not only that, but their pay is small. Of course it is impossible for anyone, except myself, to know how I have been mocked since my name first appeared in print. I have had letters asking for my autograph when I have not had the price of a meal; and I have been invited to great houses when I have not had a clean collar to wear.

But this life of hardship was greatly alleviated by the benevolence of Edward Thomas; for, during this period, he was doing his utmost to assist his friend in his struggles; and, in his friendship for Davies, he had the loyal support of his wife, Helen Thomas, who was always kind, helpful and considerate. Indeed, living in the cottage so near their home, Davies was a welcome visitor to the farmhouse where the Thomases lived, spending a great deal of his time there, a favourite with the children, and be-

coming almost one of the family. In this connection, Helen Thomas wrote to me:

> W.H.D. very much appreciated being a member of our family, for since his early boyhood, he had had no experience of a "home", and he found the family atmosphere and the domestic intimacy very congenial. I used to mend his clothes, but he used to wash them . . . He was very neat and clean always—nothing at all of the tramp in his appearance and his speech was the soft sing-song Welsh, which was very pleasant.

Edward Thomas enjoyed the company and conversation of Davies; and it was in the course of such converse, "over beer and tobacco in front of the fire at Else's Farm", that the poet related his unusual experiences to Helen and Edward—this being the genesis of the *Autobiography of a Super Tramp*, which he was persuaded to write. Concerning the *Autobiography*, Helen Thomas wrote to me:

> It is perfectly true that little by little the whole story of the Super-Tramp was told over our fire with pipes and beer at Else's Farm and that it was *entirely* Edward's idea of his making it into a book. Until that time he (W.H.D.) had not thought of writing prose . . . Edward helped Davies in every possible way with the book.

Immediately, Davies set to work, and, as the incidents were fresh in his memory, he very soon produced an untitled account of his life.

With a view to its early publication, he sent it to J. B. Pinker, who still held some of his new poems. But Pinker could not place it, for it had many defects. By 20th May, 1906, Davies had given up hope of an early acceptance of his work, so he wrote to his agent:

> If you do not see any likely prospect of disposing of my work, I should like to have it returned. The prose work is very imperfect, having been written in haste for immediate benefit, and, seeing that such an object has failed, I intend to rewrite it. As for the verse, that would also stand much revision.

On 30th May, following a letter from Davies to Pinker, Edward Thomas collected the two MSS. from the agent and also arranged, privately, for the publication of a new edition of *The Soul's Destroyer* (in abridged form); for, on 12th June, 1906, in a letter which really ended their collaboration, Davies wrote to Pinker:

> With regards to arrangement with Mr. Hueffer, I have myself, through Mr. Edward Thomas, already agreed with that gentleman for a second edition of *The Soul's Destroyer*.

This re-issue was published in March, 1907, by Messrs. Alston Rivers.

Meanwhile, Davies was very busy composing new poems in which the influence of Nature is more and more discernible; for, freed from the sordid, unpleasant surroundings of the slums of London, he was leading an almost ideal life for a poet, in a congenial environment, with abundance

of time in which to study and to meditate, as well as to explore the countryside: yet he was not oversurfeited with food to make his mental processes sluggish, and he had insufficient money to make him lazy and unambitious.

It was early in the year 1906 when Davies went to live at Stidulph's Cottage; when, as he wrote, "the hedges were bare, and there were no flowers in the fields or on the roadside banks . . . So that I had the whole year to look forward to, from the small green curls of Spring's childhood to the heavy white locks of Winter, and I was all alone to enjoy it". To Davies, it was a happy life; for, serving no master, he could lie abed in the mornings at his own sweet will and, when he rose, the day was still his own to do with as he wished. Of this time, he wrote:

> When the summer came for certain, and the air had a steady heat, I could hardly remain in the house for ten minutes at a time. In fact, I not only did all my writing out of doors, but I also had all my meals there. I became so much a part of Nature that the birds used to mistake me for the stump of a tree. So quiet would I sit in the garden that they would often fly straight at me, not discovering their mistake until I made a sudden move of surprise, just as they were about to perch on my head or shoulder . . .
>
> In the hot summer evenings I never felt inclined to go to bed until I was certain that sleep would come almost immediately. So I used to sit outside, or stand at the cottage door, watching the stars and bats, and hearing the occasional note that came from a half-sleeping bird, or that escaped him in his dreams . . . On these occasions the deep silence of the night was so eloquent that I often thought the mystery of life was about to be revealed to me in all its parts.

Thus, Davies had the leisure, the solitude and the peace of mind to write, and it is small wonder that a new spirit entered into his poetry.

The poet was also hard at work revising his *Autobiography*; and during the summer of 1906 Edward Thomas and Edward Garnett considered with him many of its details, helping with suggestions, criticism and encouragement.

This was the period of closest association between Thomas and Davies, and necessarily so; for Thomas had been given notice to leave the farmhouse in September, so that he and Davies had much to discuss and arrange in the strictly limited time at their disposal. In addition, Thomas was, of course, occupied with his own affairs—reviewing, writing books, maintaining his literary contacts, endeavouring to find another house and compiling an anthology for early publication.

When the revised version of the *Autobiography* was completed to the satisfaction of Davies, Thomas and Garnett, the next business was to find a publisher. Thomas and Garnett thought that the book would stand a better chance, would receive greater attention, and gain wider popularity

if it contained a preface by a well-known writer. Bernard Shaw was approached and agreed to write the preface.

By this time, 1907 had arrived; and soon appeared Edward Thomas's anthology, *A Pocket Book of Poems and Songs for the Open Air*. In this collection, which is fresh and unusual, Edward Thomas paid Davies the greatest compliment in his power, by placing some of his work in the company of poetry by Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, Herrick, Milton, Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, and many other immortals. At the very outset of his career, thus, Davies received important recognition.

In 1907, also, appeared Davies's second book, *New Poems*, dedicated to Helen and Edward Thomas, and published by Elkin Mathews. In a note, at the beginning of the book, the author wrote:

> Some time ago I published a book of poems called *The Soul's Destroyer*, which was kindly received. The poems in the present book have been written since, some during my stay in London, others while in the country. I don't think it necessary to classify them, as the subjects speak for themselves.

This is certainly true, for the town poems are easily distinguishable from those of the country.

W. H. DAVIES COMPOSES

I see you now, as dusk is quietly stealing
Over your snow-capped hill, in hearthside ease.
Black Venus preens and purrs, and you are feeling
Content that cats so solve complexities.
Then you nod back to pencilled strophes on trees,
Gaze at the fire, puff slow. "How white's the ceiling",
You muse; but such distractions must not tease:
Some hurt of heart this lyric shall be healing.

The rack of ragged pipes with carboned bowls
Glints as the fire search-beams its bars of light.
Now below-stairs a tea-time gong-note tolls
Tremendous news of muffins, dished in bright
Silver. You smile. Words fade which mind gave life.
You rise, knock ash out : "Coming, Dinah, wife!"

JOHN GAWSWORTH

Nailsworth, December 19, 1931

HAROLD MONRO AND "THE POETRY REVIEW"

MARVIN MAGALANER

"If you feel like that, for God's sake go back to England and do something", Maurice Hewlett shouted at him in Italy when Harold Monro complained about the condition of English poetry. Monro did go back to play what T. S. Eliot (in a letter to me of January 21, 1947) calls " . . . a role of importance and value during the period of several years up to 1914. He cared passionately though not always quite discriminaingly about poetry and was one of the few poets of whom it can be said that they cared more for poetry in general than for their own work. He not only helped in giving publicity to what have been called the 'Georgian Poets' but to the work of poets of a more advanced type. People like Pound, Flint, Aldington and the other 'Imagists' made . . . something of a centre of his Poetry Bookshop and Flint's chronicles and reviews of contemporary French poetry which were published in Monro's magazines did a great deal . . . to arouse an interest in French poetry in this country . . . anyone whose poetry he liked was sure of his support."

The literary scene to which Monro returned in the autumn of 1911 was confused. Thomas Hardy's supremacy as a poet was firmly established. The people who read poetry at all were reading Yeats and Bridges. Noisy verses by Masefield and quiet poems by William Watson, Laurence Binyon, and Gordon Bottomley drew applause. The New Poetry of the "Georgians" and of the "Imagists" was being written here and there, but it had not yet been dignified by its supporters into any formal movement, and thus it had escaped the stream of critical vituperation under which it was to be deluged, but not drowned, within the year. Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry were establishing a new literary quarterly, *Rhythm,* which attempted to discover the "aesthetic key to the future," and which published early poems of Harold Monro. Neither the old nor the new poetry seemed particularly important to the average Englishman who, if he took an interest in literature at all, was inclined to favour the novel and the play. "Poetry", says Frank Swinnerton, "was not in fashion".

Monro soon discovered, upon his return from Italy, that many of the common virtues—decency, idealism, self-sacrifice—were no longer in fashion either in literary circles. He found that poets insisted upon the right to eat and objected to writing for nothing. Enthusiasm, he discovered, was insufficient capital with which to launch a literary magazine. To most men who had passed their thirtieth year, these evidences of the weakness of human nature, even among literary people, would have come as no surprise. They shocked Monro, perhaps because he had

long been away from England, perhaps because he was, to Ezra Pound at least, "an honest man . . . (in) a *milieu* where honesty, in the degree he possessed it, is by no means a matter of course". F. S. Flint, his co-worker, saw him as "a moody young man who brooded over himself, and, not liking what he found, imagined that he would discover something better under another sky . . . " Pound felt that Monro "was pervaded by a vague uneasiness in his sadness . . . During those early years I doubt if he ever received an idea clear at first-go, or ever gripped it at once by the handle . . . I suppose he went wrong repeatedly. At any rate, that was, I believe, current opinion".

Flushed with enthusiasm, fired by Hewlett's admonition to "do something" about the state of English poetry, Monro arrived with the idea that "there ought to be poetry in England, some hearth for it . . . " He set himself resolutely to the task of establishing this hearth. He met as many literary people as he could, in different social sets and from different cultures. Richard Aldington, a young and unknown writer, met him, and through Monro he "soon got to know quantities of people".

A restaurant in Soho was a frequent meeting place of poets: Monro made it his informal headquarters where, over the steaming plates, literary criticism was shaped, writers discussed, and *coteries* formed. At one such dinner, Aldington stalked angrily out of the restaurant when he could no longer stomach the running down of Ezra Pound by Monro's guests. Pound himself tells of Monro's dinners: "He would come to table one week with the portentous news that *Wubbabua* was a great author, two weeks later *Bedivro* was a great writer. These writers were inevitably dull with the dullness of all the Wordsworthian left-over Harold admired".

But talking about poetry was not enough; people had to be made to understand it in relation to the twentieth century. This could best be accomplished, Monro decided, by the publication of a magazine of poetry and criticism which would attempt to define the relationship of poetry to life and, more important still, would "encourage the poets".

Especially propitious, therefore, seemed the letter which he received, in the autumn of 1911, from the director of the Poetry Society, asking his "active serious help" and hinting that a publisher of verse was needed "who would take up the development of the *Poetical Gazette* (the journal of the Society) as a half-interest".

> I replied that I thought I did (know a publisher), and in a few days went to see the Hon. Director and told him I would gladly edit a periodical for the Poetry Society, though I would not undertake, for the moment at all events, to publish verse.

Unwilling to be hampered by the rather conservative traditions of the Society, however, Monro preferred to avoid any financial relations with

the *Poetical Gazette*. No fifty pound interest in the staid *Gazette* was going to imperil the plan which he had for a "serious new literary venture". The inability to agree on this matter of monetary responsibility resulted in what seemed to be a deadlock. But Monro was determined, now that he had his foot in the door of the poetry public, not to yield until he had had his chance to display his wares. At his suggestion, a compromise was effected whereby he was to found "an independent monthly such as the Society required, which might prove of direct benefit to its members, though not its own actual property". Thus began the formal alliance between the backward-looking, respectable *Poetical Gazette* and the guide, philosopher and friend of the experimentalists in poetry whose outlet was *The Poetry Review*.

One need look no further than the second page of Monro's first number of *The Poetry Review* for evidence that modern English poetry was in the doldrums when he arrived on the scene in 1911. Publisher John Lane, advertising "The Best Poetry", offered for sale thirteen volumes by ten presumably contemporary poets. The misfit Poet Laureate of the mauve decade, Alfred Austin, headed the list of Victorian and *fin de siècle* left-overs with his *Love Poems*, rubbing shoulders with William Watson, elderly but still prolific. Three writers whom the world has forgotten received star billing: Olive Custance, Ethel Clifford, and Francis Coutts. Only Lascelles Abercrombie's *Emblems of Love*, which the publisher introduced almost apologetically as a new book which "will surprise even his previous admirers", gave the impression that perhaps "modern poetry" had not died in 1900.

Into what Pound calls "this Purgatory" came Monro to attempt a reform of poetry and of poetic taste in England, a task which was to last a lifetime and to consume his personal and financial resources.

First it was necessary to convince the Poetry Society that he could handle the job of editing the periodical. " . . . I practically sold myself to the Society . . . I consented to defray expenses for one year . . . " The rest of the arrangements were made, but, at the suggestion of the Society, no formal contract was drawn up. This failure to legalize his relationship was to result in his finding himself, a year later, ejected from the editor's chair with no recourse to law. But no hint of difficulties to come spoiled the enthusiasm which went into the first number of *The Poetry Review*.

The credo of an *avant garde* periodical is usually bombastic, tinged with a bravado which its authors are very far from feeling. Noise has always been a useful substitute for self-assurance. Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* is probably the most famous example of bombast "full of Pound and fury". John Middleton Murry's *Rhythm* came into being, just a few months before *The Poetry Review*, with a plea for the "brutal" in art. Ezra Pound, after he had all but pushed Dora Marsden off the pages of her

New Freewoman, made that magazine crackle with the energy of his utterances of what poetry should be. In comparison with these, Monro's *Poetry Review* appears almost conservative.

Brown paper covers, sedate and unexciting, bound the first issue, which appeared in January, 1912 under the title of *The Poetry Review* (*In Which Is Incorporated the "Poetical Gazette"*). Cautiously the policy of the magazine was announced.

> Time is ripe for the forging of a weapon of criticism, and for an emphatic enunciation of literary standards. Poetry should be, once more, seriously and reverently discussed in its relation to life, and the same tests and criteria be applied to it as to the other arts.

Certainly, there was nothing startling in an assertion which had been made, in one form or another, in almost all periods of English literature. The word "new" was not mentioned. There was to be no blasting; only discussion. This was hardly the arrogant manifesto which might have been expected from one who was soon to be accused of wild experimentation and uninhibited modernism.

> This periodical will aim not so much at producing poetry as at stimulating the desire for it. We shall strive to create an atmosphere . . . We shall seek to encourage the poets, and dissuade the poetasters from rushing into print . . .

Even the most tradition-steeped member of the Poetry Society might have found difficulty in discovering any subversive aim in this statement. It followed closely the line laid down in the charter of the Society "to promote a more general recognition and appreciation of Poetry by encouraging . . . reading of it". Beyond the natural implication that the poetry should be good poetry, the statement did not go. No indication of a leaning toward a school or clique was given. It was truly a diplomatic phrasing of a belief which was to be aired more and more pointedly in later issues until the final break. Toward the end of the pronouncement, however, were phrases which, when examined in retrospect, appear as tiny cracks in the illusion of unity of *The Poetry Review* and the Society. "Poetry . . . never the mere product of literary skill" might have been aimed at Society member Edmund Gosse whose polished verses lacked the touch of life. "We believe in . . . life rather than in letters" might well have caused Stephen Phillips to shudder, reviewing his own literary achievements. "We admire sincerity . . . we are not deceived by names: we believe in the matter rather than the signature", was probably not comforting to members Alfred Noyes and John Galsworthy.

The reception which the new periodical was accorded in the press was

not unexpected. The conservative journals adhered to a policy of patient firmness, an attitude of willingness to be shown mingled with doubt that anything would come of the enterprise. *The New Age* went further, accused the *Poetry Review* of encouraging poor poets "whose achievements should have been kept as a private family joy". Those reviews which were also outside the commercial fringe, in the advance guard of new poetry, applauded the appearance on the scene of a new progressive force.

Among the very people whom the *Poetry Review* was designed to aid, the idea of such a literary magazine was taken as somewhat of a joke. Edward Marsh wrote to Rupert Brooke: "Did you ever hear of the *Poetry Review*? I am afraid that it is rather an absurd publication . . . but it is beautifully printed, and . . . has a circulation of 4,000 copies" Brooke called the writers in the *Poetry Review* "honest stammerers", but admitted that he had been subscribing to it since its first issue But the magazine was anything but a joke to the earnest young men, and the few old ones, who made up its editorial staff.

In spite of Monro's statement that his staff was "not too grave", his writers were serious-minded people to whom literature was not merely an avocation. Arundel del Re acted as assistant-editor and chief translator. Richard Aldington wrote book reviews for which he was not paid. Ezra Pound, roving correspondent for Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* magazine, contributed numerous articles, realizing how important it was to establish good relations with an influential editor, and to have an outlet in London for his theories of writing. Not satisfied with his series of articles which were then appearing in *The New Age*, feeling, perhaps, that they were not reaching the audience which might read the *Poetry Review*, he tried to keep as many irons in the fire as the situation would allow. Wilfrid Wilson Gibson and F. S. Flint complete the list of important figures who appeared in the magazine, but a roster of occasional contributors may be mentioned: J. C. Squire, T. Sturge Moore, Henry Newbolt, John Drinkwater, Maurice Browne and Darrell Figgis.

Many advance guard magazines, because they must take an extreme position to shock the public into hearing their message, are forced to adopt the attitude that their side can do no wrong and that the opposition is incapable of doing right. It is to Monro's credit that his *Poetry Review* tried to examine the literature submitted to it on its merits, not on its source. Thus we find staff-member F. S. Flint deciding that staff member Ezra Pound "will not have added much to his reputation with these *Canzoni* . . . " And later in *The Poetry Review*, Clifford Bax received rough treatment from a brother-writer who said of his *Poems, Dramatic and Lyrical:* "Mr. Bax . . . has not sufficiently assimilated it (his idea) . . . In dealing with such vast subjects it is necessary to convey a vivid impression rather than an intimate knowledge".

Such criticism, directed against the poetry itself, and not against a school or a rival critical group, was a healthy augury in a period of narrow coteries. But far more important here, is the discussion of Monro's *role* in encouraging and directing the modern poets.

Under the heading, "Important Announcement", in the July, 1912 *Review,* appeared an offer which, modest as it was, received a great deal of attention at the time because it showed confidence in the poetry currently being written.

> The Editor of *The Poetry Review* begs to announce an offer which, he is confident, will prove of interest to readers of the *Review*, and stimulate public appreciation of the poems appearing from month to month in its pages . . . THIRTY POUNDS will be awarded for the best poem, long or short, published in the *Review* during . . . 1912.

The announcement suggested also that those readers who were interested in the cause of modern poetry might wish to contribute to a fund from which, in 1913, a prize of one hundred pounds could be offered. The offer in itself was unusual enough to cause much comment among writers of verse, who were used to paying publishers for the privilege of having their verses printed. But much more significant than the prize was the selection of the winning poem. To Rupert Brooke, shortly before his tragic death, went the honour, for his distinctively Georgian poem, *The Old Vicarage, Grantchester.*

Surely this famous Anthology-piece was no wildly experimental poem bristling with images of the age of speed, set to a twentieth century tempo? Yet unless one holds that the man who offered the prize, printed the poem, and judged the contest was not speaking for himself in his decision, one must assume that Monro was more satisfied with this contribution of Brooke than with any other poem submitted to his journal in 1912. But how can this be squared with Monro's reputation for experiment in verse and with the abuse heaped upon him by conservative critics?

As a Georgian, Monro was a rebel against Victorian and *fin de siècle* practices in poetry, but such dubious rebellion is hardly grounds enough on which to label him a modernist in the sense that E. E. Cummings and T. S. Eliot are modernists. If Monro is considered a member of this group, then the conclusion cannot be avoided that his early enthusiasm, so evident even in the guarded manifesto of *The Poetry Review,* had been considerably dampened by his few months in London, and that he was now willing merely to escape the deadening influence of the Victorian left-overs with personal and literary association with the young poets.

He opened the pages of his *Poetry Review* to them, printing their poems

and welcoming their critical writing. Of the seventeen poets whose work appeared in the *Georgian Poetry, 1911-1912* volume, only three had not published earlier in *The Poetry Review*. And, since it was his stated purpose to publish nothing which did not come up to his standard of good poetry, it may be assumed that Monro backed the poetry which appeared. The criticism of Georgian poets in *The Poetry Review* was almost completely favourable. Thus, the poems of W. W. Gibson were "incommensurably great"; Masefield's *The Everlasting Mercy* was "so tense and vital that it silences criticism"; Abercrombie's work was of such surpassing beauty that "No other book, so golden and glowing with the exaltation and the exuberant energy of life . . . has been published in our time".

Perhaps it was because of his middle-of-the-road position in modern poetry that Monro was under attack from both sides—those who felt, with the Poetry Society, that he had failed to be properly respectful to the traditional poets of Alfred Austin's stamp; and those, like Pound, who were impatient to experiment with anything new for the sake of newness.

Monro's rather hazy position in the poetry world did not go unnoticed. Herbert Palmer says of him that he "found himself in the rather difficult position of Mr. Facing-both-ways". It was clearly only a matter of time until he would have to decide between the all-out conservatism of the Poetry Society,* whose representative he was as editor of *The Poetry Review,* and an independent attitude toward modern poetry. Fortunately or not, the decision was taken out of his hands by the Society whose leaders determined to place the leadership of its official organ in the control of someone more enthusiastic for the aims of the organization.

The severing of relations was speedily and efficiently accomplished. Just before the December, 1912 issue of *The Poetry Review* was to go to press, the Society presented to Monro the proofs of *The Poetical Gazette* for that month. The first page contained the sharp news that "THE JOURNAL OF THE POETRY SOCIETY Beginning with the next number, JANUARY, will be issued under the Editorship of MR. STEPHEN PHILLIPS and a brilliant list of contributors as been secured . . . "

Relief at being free from the restraint of obligation to a group with which he had little sympathy was probably Monro's first emotion. But his native honesty made it obvious to him that many commitments which he had made for *The Poetry Review* would now pass out of his power to fulfil. People had subscribed to the magazine, many of them because they were impressed by his editorship and by his notions of what poetry should be. Further, the prize of thirty pounds for the best poem printed in the magazine was still hanging fire. The Georgians were looking to him for an outlet for their verses. There was no way to retire with honour from this literary fight.

The answer, Monro decided, lay in carrying on through the medium of

* The reference here is to 1912—*Editor.*

a new review, dependent upon no group for its existence, and free to cater only to the tastes of its staff and subscribers. He received permission to preface *The Poetical Gazette's* announcement of Phillips's editorship with an explanatory understatement: "Mr. Harold Monro, having decided to enlarge the scope of his periodical by issuing it quarterly under the title *Poetry and Drama*" . . . etc. This helped a little to clarify the issue.

Legally, Monro had no redress, for the Society, not having signed a contract with him at the start, was "acting fully within its legal rights". He recalled the mounting differences in the ideas of the Society and of *The Poetry Review:*

> . . . our irreconcilable divergences became apparent. The committee could never agree . . . From the start I absolutely refused compromise to advertisers, supporters, famous people, or friends; I insisted on bad verse being called bad verse . . . I objected to the tone of the *Gazette*, to the irrelevant snobbery of the Society's list of patrons, and finally to a notice . . . to the effect that "authoritative critical opinion and criticism" could be obtained *for a fee* . . .

The split was complete and final.

New York, 1949

THE POETRY SOCIETY

Founded February 24, 1909 :: Incorporated June 18, 1923

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary,
General Offices of The Poetry Society (Incorporated),
33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

I desire to be enrolled as a member; entrance fee and first annual subscription (22/6d.) enclosed herewith.

(*The Annual Subscription becomes due and renewable on the completion of one year from the date of joining. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to The Poetry Society.*)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Date .....

POETRY IN AUSTRALASIA

4. ROBERT D. FITZGERALD (b. 1902)

PHILIP LINDSAY

In the first of these essays I mentioned C. J. Brennan and I now regret that I did not devote an entire article to his work if only to show the effect he has had on later writers. Largely, this effect has been a bad one, Brennan's symbolist theories in which mystery and beauty can remain mysterious and beautiful only by being kept a secret becoming in the hands of weaker followers too often an excuse for meandering vagueness leading nowhere. In a final essay I hope to deal with these minor poets, but here we meet the only Australian who has been able to absorb Brennan's symbolism and out of it create great works. This is because FitzGerald could reject his master's faith in the unstated—which was taken from the French school of Mallarmé—and by using much of Brennan's form and technique could build his own city of song on more earthy foundations. Although his work is mostly philosophical, a pursuit of intellectual rather than of physical adventure, he has never allowed abstractions to become an end in themselves, as too often happened with Brennan, who sometimes beat his wings in the sky, pinioned on ecstasy alone.

The great difficulty in discussing FitzGerald with an audience probably ignorant of his achievement is that his more important works are either long or longish and to quote pieces from them would destroy their carefully built structure. Therefore I find myself reduced to giving in its entirety the shortest of these long poems, which means ignoring much else. But there is no alternative, as you will see; for how could one pluck lines from the following work, *The Face of the Waters*?—*

> Once again the scurry of feet—those myriads
> crossing the black granite; and again
> laughter cruelly in pursuit; and then
> the twang like a harpstring or the spring of a trap,
> and the swerve on the polished surface: the soft little pads
> sidling and skidding and avoiding; but soon caught up
> in the hand of laughter and put back . . .

* With the important *Heemskerck Shoals*, this was published in *Australian Poetry 1944*, selected by R. G. Howarth (Angus & Robertson, Castlereagh Street, Sydney, and 48 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1). *The Fifth Day* appeared in *The Sydney Bulletin*, and the remainder of FitzGerald's poetry mentioned in this essay in *Moonlight Acre* (Melbourne University Press : the Oxford University Press, England), 1938.

There is no release from the rack
of darkness for the unformed shape,
the unexisting thought
stretched half-and-half
in the shadow of beginning and the denser black
under the imminence of huge pylons—
the deeper nought;

but neither is there anything to escape,
or to laugh,
or to twang that string which is not a string but silence
plucked at the heart of silence.

Nor can there be a floor to the bottomless;
except in so far as conjecture must arrive
lungs cracking, at the depth of its dive;
where downward further is further distress
with no change in it; as if a mile and an inch
are equally squeezed into a pinch,
and retreating limits of cold mind
frozen, smoothed, defined.

Out of the tension of silence (the twanged string);
from the agony of not being (that terrible laughter
tortured by darkness); out of it all
once again the tentative migration; once again
a universe on the edge of being born:
feet running fearfully out of nothing
at the core of nothing:
colour, light, life, fearfully
becoming eyes and understanding: sound becoming ears . . .

For eternity is not space reaching
on without end to it; not time without end to it,
nor infinity working round in a circle;
but a placeless dot enclosing nothing,
the pre-time pin-point of impossible beginning,
enclosed by nothing, not even by emptiness—
impossible: so wholly at odds with possibilities
that, always emergent and wrestling and inter-linking,
they shatter it and return to it, are all of it and part of it.
It is your hand stretched out to touch your neighbour's,
and feet running through the dark, directionless like darkness.

Worlds that were spun adrift re-enter
that intolerable centre;
indeed the wildest-looping comet
never departed from it;
it alone exists.
And though, opposing it, there persists
the enormous structure of forces, laws,
as background for other coming and going,
that's but a pattern, a phase, no pause,
of ever-being-erected, ever-growing
ideas unphysically alternative
to nothing, which is the quick. You may say hills live,
or life's the imperfect aspect of a flowing
that sorts itself as hills; much as thoughts wind
selectively through mind.

The eggshell collapses
in the fist of the eternal instant;
all is what it was before.
Yet is that eternal instant
the pinpoint bursting into reality,
the possibilities and perhapses,
the feet scurring on the floor.
It is the suspense also
with which the outward thrust
holds the inward surrender—
the stresses in the shell before it buckles under:
the struggle to magpie-morning and all life's clamour and lust;
the part breaking through the whole;
light and the clear day and so simple a goal.

As can be seen here, such poetry cannot be quoted in snippets and therefore merely as titles must I pass over such important long works as *Moonlight Acre, The Hidden Bole, Essay on Memory* and *Heemskerck Shoals,* each of which is perfect of its kind. What cannot be ignored, however, is the latest development in his work. Out of philosophy FitzGerald is moving into life and action and his most recent poem, *Fifth Day,* dealing with the trial of Warren Hastings—alas, again too long to be given here—shows a brightly coloured scene in Westminster Hall, Splendid the vision, making the past come colourfully to life, but in the final stanza FitzGerald turns from the great folk and the embattled politicians to express the idea which runs through so much of his work, the importance of the apparently unimportant, of some midget man who, unrecognised at the time and probably despised, is yet the recorder of history:

Fox hurried to Burke's aid. The court adjourned.
Gurney stoppered his inkhorn, wiped his pen . . .
Poor Mr. Burke! But (good as money earned)
adjournments eased the labour; so lesser men
could go home early now and then.
Here was today for the readers to receive,
packed in meticulous shorthand. He bowed, took leave.

By profession, FitzGerald is a surveyor and those years spent in the bush amongst the ghostly gum-trees and under that Southern sky of multitudinous stars, brought contemplation, as it did not to most of his contemporaries jailed in noisy cities who could not escape humanity. Bowed by the dizzying sky, for long periods he dwelt alone, miles from other human beings, and out of this loneliness were his works wrought with Brennan as the spark to set his fire alight. Then back to Sydney, to the world of men, he would return for a debauch of talk and, being then young, he and I laughed many an afternoon and evening gloriously away. Our society of two or three was named by Fitz the "Pre-Kiplingites", such being his impatience with the "modern" patter of juggled words without roots; and truly through Fitz have those "Pre-Kiplingites" achieved more than even they ever dreamed of achieving.

I resent the curb of space which holds me from Gargantuan quotations of a poet I love, which refuses the entrance of his lyrics, his occasional fiery outbursts against covention's restraints, and his profound worship of Nature which has nothing sentimental in it, but is rather the admiration of an enemy who knows the strength of the foe. But to prove that when he turns from philosophy, or from ecstatic visions of life and man, FitzGerald can write as enchanting personal poetry as not many today can achieve, here is a short work from *Moonlight Acre*:

Dear, it would not in any way be wise
for you to love me more than as a whim
pleases the heart a moment or as dim
shadows of fancy dance before the eyes;
for Love, who seemed smooth laughter eager to rise,
shall strut, a tyrant merciless and grim,
over the desolate land surrendered him,
and need no more to flaunt his gay disguise;
and you had best remember that I hail
from no sane country, granaried with increase,
where men are reasoned, constant, single-willed,
but am of the moon's children, those who fail
in all set purposes, who wreck their peace
for faith in faiths foredoomed and unfulfilled.

LILIAN HELEN BOWES LYON

1895-1949

An Appreciation by
DR. JOHN MURRAY

Miss Bowes Lyon was the youngest daughter of the Hon. Francis Bowes Lyon of Ridley Hall, Northumberland, a grand-daughter of the 13th Earl of Strathmore, and a cousin of H.M. Queen Elizabeth. Her mother, née Lady Anne Lindsay, was a namesake of an earlier daughter of the house of Crawford and Balcarres who wrote "Auld Robin Gray", and became well known in South Africa as Lady Anne Barnard.

She was educated by governesses at home, the youngest of seven. From childhood she was singularly responsive to the circumstances and influences of life in West Northumberland—the family, the countryside, the people of all sorts and classes, and the animals. She read, and rode, and played the piano, and sang, Scotch and Irish songs for choice. She took early to writing poems and tales out of a brimming interest in human kind and Nature. Of these *juvenilia* she kept few and published none. She was already something of a personality, buoyant and shy, modest and devoted, of versatile gifts, and courage, and great integrity of mind.

In the first war she nursed as a V.A.D. in London and Oxfordshire. Then followed a spell of study, first at Westfield College and afterwards at Oxford as a member of the Society of Home Students. At Oxford she wrote prose and verse, and read philosophy with authentic zest. Her proper study was mankind by all avenues of imagination and sincere insight. She had the saving grace of searching for the better and stronger things—less a grace than the core of her genius. The search was nothing abstract but very personal, the other side of a vivid life. From Oxford she went to London and worked under Miss Margery Fry in the cause of Penal Reform, and taught in the short-lived continuation schools of the L.C.C. She went farming for a time in Dorset, and lived abroad, in France Switzerland, Italy and Greece, and spent a winter on the South African veldt. She learned French and Italian and Russian, three wide windows on humanity for the seeing heart.

After publishing a novel, *The Buried Stream*, she abandoned the medium for poetry. The contents of slender brochures published at intervals appeared last year in the *Collected Poems*, itself a slender volume and as challenging as slender. Its values are not easy for contemporaries to estimate: she made too vivid an impact on them as poet and person. The outstanding distinction of her work is beyond question. Vision bred affection in her, and affection deepened vision.

She was of no movement or coterie but rather of the school of humanity, writing upon occasions of rich and various touch with life. What spontaneity furnished she fashioned with all the fastidious resource of a strong mind and sure feeling. In an age of disintegrative art she was resolute for music and beauty and finish. Her poems flowed in cascadings of lovely words.

In the second war she bore her part of service, helping in the evacuation of children from the East End and in rehousing the bombed, working in shelters and canteens, and making her home on the spot, in Stepney and Poplar. She had long suffered from a serious progressive illness, and war work maimed her. She lost a leg by amputation on V.E. Day, and presently the other. Thereafter she held court in her room. It is given to few to bear grievous pain for many years with gay and glowing courage, or to die loved and cherished by so many friends.

IN MEMORIAM

LILIAN BOWES LYON

(*Died* July 25th, 1949)

Over the wireless I heard that you were dead.
You were a news item, jostled between
The Dockers' Return to Work and the Test Match Scene:
A few typed lines by a rushed announcer read.

Of course, I knew that Shadow, soft-foot ghost,
With fatal-faithful following had caressed
Your flesh, years long; but I had never guessed
Its courtship was so strong, your heart so lost.

Restless with trying to sing the world to rights
You tended the wounds of Stepney with your love;
Shared the impossible bomb, the incendiary wave,
Sang Resurrection through the sepulchral nights.

The Winter years undid you, but your tongue
Proclaimed no invalid; the flesh was snared,
But hopeful anthems, brave as any bird,
Upsoared. The Singer died before the Song.

PETER APPLETON

ESSAYISTS AND POETS

Reviewed by
WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

An Introduction to Aesthetics by E. F. Carritt (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d.); *Poets and Story-Tellers* by Lord David Cecil (Constable, 10s.); *Glory of Life* and *Now that the Gods are Dead* by Llewelyn Powys (Bodley Head, 4s. 6d.); *In the Green Tree* by Alun Lewis, Ill. by John Petts (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.); *Coleridge as Critic* by Herbert Read (Faber & Faber, 6s.); *Demos the Emperor* by Osbert Sitwell (Macmillan, 2s. 6d.); *The Saga of Judas* by Wallace Nichols (Newman Wolsey Ltd., 6s.); *Ivory and Horn* by Nora Kennedy McCausland (Fortune Press, 6s.).

Several books of prose fall to my portion on this occasion (and, in passing, I would remind member-readers that these and thousands of others can be referred to in the library in our headquarters at Portman Square) and they cover a good deal of ground for students of poetry. The first, perhaps, in its general application, is Professor E. F. Carritt's admirable *Introduction to Aesthetics*, in which the illustration of English Poetry occurs constantly like an illuminated and significant thread. I have not space to discuss the book in detail, but a chapter which I found of especial interest is that on Form and Subject in Poetry, wherein the author starts from a suggestion by Roger Fry that the inferiority of neolithic to palaeolithic painting might be due to the birth or growth of language and voices the puzzling question that arose in his mind: "Would any art analogous to poetry have been possible without speech? What if a tongue-tied race had invented a system of ideograms or purely conventional gestures?" This leads him to a slant of thought on Chinese ideographs and the common Western abbreviations of expression and to the conclusion that the externals of a generally accepted symbolism of signs do not in themselves achieve beauty; the beauty consists "in the fusion of a sensuous image with an inner experience which it expressed, so that the expression seemed as inevitable as a smile". It follows that, whatever the form used for the expression of a poetic experience the life-principle of a poem is the individual fusion of all the constituent elements, and that process is in each instance something unique and untranslatable —the poet's own private magic of creation. It is this private magic which, as Sir Edmund Gosse pointed out in one of his essays, made of Robert Burns's "My luve is like a red, red rose" something that defied imitation or paraphrase.

That individual element or make-up of the poet is commented upon in

Lord David Cecil's admirable book of critical essays, *Poets and Story-Tellers*, the first two chapters of which are concerned with Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra" and with the plays of that other Elizabethan, John Webster. Of Shakespeare compared with his gloomy contemporary Lord David says: "He made his characters so like real people that the preposterous stories in which they take part become both convincing and poignant to us". He uses the Elizabethan theatre "to give an impression of the heterogeneous diversity of real life. Webster could not do these things; he had neither Shakespeare's sense of character nor his breadth of sympathy. Where he rose above his contemporaries was in intellectual and spiritual insight. He uses the Elizabethan freedom to express a vision of the conflict of spiritual forces that, in his view, lie behind the appearances of life as we see it". This essay on Webster is valuable for its insistence on judging the poet according to his aims and intentions (too seldom the case in criticism). Webster grumbles "because the vulgarity of popular taste will not permit him to use those devices of chorus and messenger . . . which gave dignity to Greek tragic art", and Lord David sympathises with him for having "aims similar to those of Euripides" but having to work within a dramatic convention which was a popular entertainment and not "a civilised form of art designed to gratify a fastidious trained taste". Webster's vision was a moral one. "Each play presents us with a picture of an act of sin and its consequences. A very sombre picture too!" But Shakespeare—as Lord David says in his examination of "Antony and Cleopatra"—"was not a moralist. He appreciated goodness, and disliked evil; but he did not approach life primarily from the moral point of view", and in this strangely contradictory drama of passion and power he "teaches us that it is possible to face life at its most baffling and imperfect and unideal, and yet to find it inextinguishably enthralling and splendid". It will be seen from these quotations how human and lucid Lord David is in his critical approach.

The essays of the late Llewelyn Powys reflect a white intensity of vision of life itself—not of life seen through the creative imagination of other writers; and in the latest volume to be added to the uniform edition of his works we find this extraordinary poet-mind at its nimblest and most profound. To have been born was for him "a chance that outweighs all; and the wise man recognizes a sacred obligation to each fleet moment". Powys was a prose poet with his own magical sources of imagination and statement and he found nothing incompatible between his conviction "that when we are dead, we are dead" and his praise of the glory of life's pageant. This book, *The Glory of Life*, should be on the shelves of all who recognize and love modern English prose at its best.

Another fine prose talent was emerging—had indeed already emerged —when the war engulfed Alun Lewis. He was a son of the people and a true and instinctive poet who kept his individual way among the clamours

and assertions of contemporary schools of verse. He had simplicity and sometimes the grandeur of olympian utterance, as in the lines "But love survives the venom of the snake" and "The gradual self-effacement of the dead", but, as this book of war letters and short stories shows, he bade fair to establish himself as an all-round man of letters. *In the Green Tree* is memorable for a self-assertion which is never cheaply egotistical. Lewis was always looking within himself, examining his thoughts and emotions, considering his place and meaning in his world of experience. Poetry was a passion with him: on the troopship he is haunted by the outline of an elusive poem ("But I can't reach it. Do you see how a poem is made—or fails? By perpetually trying, by closer and closer failing, by seeking and not finding, *and still seeking* . . ."), in India he is reading Rilke and is "enticed, seduced, and destroyed by the long octopus arms and the hungry hard mouth of a shapeless poem that will never be written"; and in his tent in the morning he murders "Cherry Ripe" and watches the antics of two black robins. "They perch on my books and look in the mirror and ruffle their wings and peck their images. And drop their little ordure on Spender, Shakespeare and the Bible and sing like angels, but like *angels*". It takes the super-sensuous and Epicurean philosophy of a Llewelwyn Powys to reconcile oneself to the loss to literature entailed in the death of this eager and gifted poet.

My last prose volume, Mr. Herbert Read's *Coleridge as Critic*, might well merit an article by itself. Mr. Read has made of the English Romantics a long and loving examination and the recent re-issue of his provocative study of Wordsworth bears witness to his close interest in that Revival which ushered in what—to my mind—was the greatest century in English poetry—the Nineteenth. That debatable thesis on Wordsworth's early love-life and its supposed after-effects upon his poetry needed no equipment of comparative philosophy for its understanding, but, in the case of the present book (a lecture delivered last year in an American university) Mr. Read's arguments and conclusions call from the reader an understanding based upon an acquaintance with the philosophical tenets of Kant, Kierkegaard, Schelling, Hume, Hartley, Bergson and Freud, and I humbly admit that my acquaintance with most of their essential principles is but piecemeal. But what is clear to me in a passing introduction of Mr. Read's book is that he is not concerned to investigate the application and validity of Coleridge's literary criticism so much as to establish the philosophical origins on which that criticism was based. First and foremost Coleridge "made his standpoint the Christian revelation" with its concomitants of ethical understanding and application, but beyond and within and around that main standpoint was a vast knowledge of literary and aesthetic values which made him perhaps the greatest concentrated literary critic England has produced. As Shakespeare in "Hamlet" did before him, he anticipated Freud in his understanding of

the Unconscious. Coleridge, as Mr. Read finely concludes, "made criticism into a science, and using his own experiences and those of his fellow poets as material for his research, revealed to the world for the first time some part of the mystery of genius and of the universal and eternal significance of art".

Coming to the books of verse we have first Sir Osbert Sitwell's *Demos the Emperor*, which, because of its authorship, has been referred to as a satire but which Sir Osbert himself calls "a secular oratorio". The one description will fit the work just as well as the other, for although the intention is satiric, even savagely satiric, the construction and movement could possibly utilise some musical adjuncts and aids—but in what compressed version of the Royal Albert Hall and to what kind of living audience I cannot imagine. The note is struck by the picture on the cover —of a gross, hairy, obese, fanged and clawed, semi-human figure holding a worm for sceptre and crowned with broken bottles; against a belching background of what I take to be our industrial civilisation. Good! and that is what we are to find inside; and we do. After the opening Argument of "The squirrel with a rose"—which seems to indicate that the attractive little rodent prefers a lyrical conquest of the stars to a prosaic gathering of nuts—we plunge into a medley of songs, choruses and recitatives from which emerges one dominant and derisory lamentation: that the world is no longer a place of "long nights made for lovers", with "honey-pale gardens where man's heart could flower", but a dreadful state of Demos's creating where the millions have:

> An equal share, enough of everything
> To fill a coffin . . .

a state of prodigious vulgarity where, under Demos and Autork, the people sweat blood and steel. It is a grim picture, relieved by those lyrical threads of nostalgic beauty which Sir Osbert knows so well how to weave into the pattern; but, as with most allegories and personifications, it is only partially true and justified. Democracy is not all broken bottles, blood, red bungalows and woods mosaicked with cigarette-stubs, and the world's teeming millions *never have had* those arcadies of quiet and loveliness for which the poet yearns. When the going was good there have been privileged pockets of beauty and pleasure among plagues and pestilences, tyrannies and dictators, but never any general Eden. Sir Osbert might lament more profitably about the heart of man than about an inevitable political system.

One of the most ambitious and accomplished poems of our decade has been written by Mr. Wallace Nichols in *The Saga of Judas*. In something between 500 and 600 five-lined stanzas linked partially on a sestina principle he has essayed a narrative and an interpretation of the greatest

Betrayer of all time, and he has done it with a Miltonic thoroughness of conception and personification only matched in our day by Mr. John Redwood Anderson. Indeed these two senior contemporaries have much in common in their choice of high majestic themes and in their alert traditionalism of form and vocabulary. Mr. Nichols' conception of Judas is of a man whose traitor kiss had been meant "for a call, Messiah's test— He had meant the Kingdom, at that kiss, to live! but who, in "the lion's gaze" of his Master's eyes, had realised his sin and his doom. In a panic of atonement he hangs himself, intent to be in Sheol when Jesus arises on the third day and leads forth the kingdom of the dead; but in the Abyss he remains outcast and accurst, tortured by Satan and his son Abbaton (Death), until Death gives him his quietus for the second time and he is released "to sow with spirit new spaces". It is a noble conception, strongly and beautifully handled in a clarity of phrase which to-day is all too rare, and I warmly recommend both the author and his book to my readers.

In *Ivory and Horn*, by Miss Nora Kennedy McCausland, I find energy and a natural lyricism which too often fail in an indiscipline of thought and form; and yet, not one of these forty-five poems is without interest. In her range of subject-matter the author reminds me of the late Anna Wickham, but the latter was economical in her method whereas Miss McCausland is inclined to a gossipy fullness of utterance. In her "Scene in a Communal Kitchen" for instance, every amusing impression is set down to body forth the comparison of women workers to the ritualists of a savage tribe: the point is thrust in so hard, yet so loosely, that it is lost. And when, in the three companion poems discussing the Animal, Vegetable and Mineral worlds, the author ransacks her well-stored mind for thoughts and images, again the effect is that of a dexterous word-game played with high spirits when we were very young. Where she is at her best is in the close and loving exploration of an idea in a small compass, as when she perceives all the woodwork in a house as dead trees clasping and protecting a man's life:

> The shelves grow high as palms above his bed,
> In their hollows all his thoughts are laid,
> Under the dead branch lies his head.
> Arboreal man, still hiding
> In the depths of the tree's shade.

That is the conclusion of a memorable poem.

SHORTER REVIEWS

The White Pony: An Anthology of Chinese Poetry from the Earliest Times to the Present Day, newly translated. Edited by Robert Payne (Allen & Unwin, 16s.).

Let it be said at once that Mr. Payne's latest and most ambitious volume is supremely readable. It is also open to criticism from at least three aspects: as translation, as anthology, and as poetry. It is in the third of these aspects that it seems likely to be of particular interest to readers of *The Poetry Review*. Considered as a set of new translations (they are by several hands) it is refreshing but necessarily uneven. Considered as an anthology it is probably more comprehensive and better balanced than any single volume of its kind hitherto available in English: and it is especially to be welcomed for its attempt to fill those two millennial gaps which, for most readers, yawn on either side of the T'ang dynasty. Finally, considered as poetry, this book makes available to the contemporary poetic consciousness new forms, new rhythms, new imagery. Those familiar with Mr. Payne's books will discover here again evidences of his power to infect the reader with his own wide range of enthusiasms. His romantic outlook and a certain carelessness of detail are likewise reflected in *The White Pony*.

The titlepiece, a very early poem, is rendered in a manner calculated to arouse nostalgic childhood memories of Shetland ponies; and although the Chinese have never shared the English attitude to Our Dumb Friends, and although the official Confucian commentator explains that the poem simply expresses regret at the abandonment of public life by an admired official, Mr. Payne's rendering cannot be called inaccurate. The terseness of classical Chinese permits the translator great latitude. But there are translations here in which Mr. Payne has evidently misconstrued, not merely the Chinese, but the structure of the poem. Thus on p. 37 ("In the wood lay a dead doe") the delicacy of the pattern is violated by the introduction of an unwarranted climax in the first stanza.

Some of the twenty-odd Chinese translators who sign their names to later poems in this book fall sometimes into other traps. Pidgin has its charm: but the overpoetic note struck by the oriental student with an inadequate command of English can jar, as in Mr. Hsieh's shot at Tu Fu:

> See you not Heng Mountain towering over Hunan hills,
> From its summit the vermeil phoenix murmuring lean
> Over to gaze, forever seeking his comrades?

Tu Fu's musings upon his brothers by moonlight appear in two versions; and arch self-portraits of Tao Yüanming occur three times, once in prose, once in Han style, and once on p. 140 like this:

> In the East there dwells a scholar
> Who is often found wanting in clothing and sheets.
> In thirty days he has but nine meals,
> One carp lasts him a whole decade . . .

The Chinese taste for the *faisandé* is proverbial; and the ancient and fish like smell conjured up by the fourth line certainly lingers in the memory But by glancing back at the alternative version on p. 136 the reader finds the line there rendered as: "He will wear out his *hat* in ten years"; and it dawns on him that "carp" is in fact merely a misprint for "cap".

It is very easy to carp; and there are several such pieces of printer's devilry in this book. But what remains when criticism is exhausted is a volume which for good reasons should find a place on every poet's bookshelf. There is the clear perspective, the unbroken line of China's three thousand years of poetic achievement. There are the early poems, with their innocence and vigour so freshly caught, as in this version of a stone-drum fragment:

> When the stags run fast
> We struggle against the wild bulls
> That come so huge and so rough.
> When the wild bulls come out alone
> O we shoot, we shoot . . .

There is also much poetry that has never before been translated from the Chinese. There is the surprisingly fine excess of:

> I was clad in angelica and nightshade
> And from my girdle hung autumn orchids.

There are also girdles of lapis-lazuli tinkling *ling-lang*; there are the plums of T'ang and Sung; there are random chunks of the mysterious *Tao tê Ching*; above all there are the magnificent poems of Li Ho (not to be confused with Li Po) with their imagery so precise and so brilliantly articulated:

> The bright silk trappings are onion-green;
> Gold rings hold down the saddle, shaking with sweet music.

This is an anthology one cannot refuse: a rough and ready bouquet of mixed wild and hothouse blooms, presented with irresistibly charming kowtows by Mr. Payne and his two-and-twenty eager earnest students.

HUGH GORDON PORTEUS

Paul Verlaine: *Selected Poems*. Translated by C. F. MacIntyre (University of California Press).

Why, apart from the most obvious reasons, is it so hard to translate poetry? The better the poetry, the less difficult; for then, although one may be up a tree for the exact shades and nicenesses of *parallel precision* at sea and bewildered one is not, wondering what this or that line is about. Incidentally, the whole subject of translating poetry into poetry that will stand up in its own right—and of course pass every test of exactness and non-betrayal—strikes one as a fine subject of polemic between translators. Could we not have an *Enquête* to Translators, enriched with diagonals, such as *Translator v. Translator* and *Translator v. Reader?*

This being said, C. F. MacIntyre's *Paul Verlaine*: *Selected Poems* should be recognised as competent and pretty exact as to meaning. Laudably the French original is alongside of the translations. I wish it were in me to say that I think of MacIntyre as a poet; a good poet, I mean. That he is such, *at moments,* is evident. To put Baudelaire into English (even more than Verlaine, because by far the better of the two), maybe one would have to be the finest English poet (perfect knowledge of French and of all allusions, besides a perfect ear and a large vocabulary are, obviously, implied as well). These English versions of MacIntyre, some of them, do stand up in their own right, and one example of an entirely successful, and lovely, translation is that of No. XX in *Sagesse* (p. 169). And yet I think that some of the small but very essential notes in the whole song have disappeared. One image alone in a poem *may* be an essential, and perhaps it is not here, it was untranslatable. The note would simply not come out as a note on another instrument.

MacIntyre's commentary on the six different volumes of Verlaine's poems that he has drawn from is of great interest. It sets *le pauvre Lélian* in his literary-historical background. Of his translations MacIntyre says: "I have not hesitated, when it was a matter either of preserving the meaning (as I saw it) or of wrenching the sense to get a more perfect rhyme, to adopt any slant, suspended or near-rhymes, consonances or assonances which suggested themselves." All this is to the good, save the "wrenching", for would that not be treachery? MacIntyre is certainly not guilty of that. *Tour de force*, and a-plenty, is evident (and how else could Verlaine be translated?) and his obvious feeling for Verlaine himself What one likes less is the *taste* in words—in some words—of this poet-

translator (author of four volumes of poems), which is responsible for many lines here and there in the translation which seem to me on the border (not to say worse) of pure and simple *bad* literary taste.

But can poetry be put into poetry in another language and receive its full due?

NANCY CUNARD

Dylan Thomas by Henry Treece (Lindsay Drummond, 7s. 6d.).

Dylan Thomas was twenty when his first book was published in 1934. At that time, Auden, Spender, Day Lewis and MacNeice had established a vogue for political and collectivist verse which seemed to leave little chance for a Welsh individualist to break their commercial ring. That Dylan Thomas did so without arousing too much hostility is perhaps due to the fact that he shared Gerard Manley Hopkins and the Metaphysical poets with them as influences and that it was easy to find Freudian symbols in his work. With the general public, there was also the inducement that he supplied a power and freshness which contrasted favourably with the niggling intellectuality and cheap-jack poetical jokes of the Pylon School.

By 1938, therefore, it was natural that Henry Treece should take the poetry of Dylan Thomas as the focal point of the new Apocalyptic Movement. For the past four years Thomas had become a kind of "dog among the fairies" in the literary world. Whatever surréalist mannerisms could be found in him, there was little doubt that in the final shaping of the poem, he knew what he was doing, and that much of what he was doing was concerned with the traditional basic themes of poetry. In 1938, the atmosphere was apocalyptic enough to anticipate the type of destruction described so brilliantly in M. P. Shiel's tremendous novel *The Purple Cloud*, and as the "proletarian" poets disappeared hastily into the Ministry of Information or migrated to America, a loose federation of individual poets combined for the purpose of asserting "that Man was in need of greater freedom, economic no less than aesthetic. from machines and mechanistic thinking". And whatever their faults as poets, their revolt was important as the first anti-totalitarian movement since the early Twenties.

It is easy to criticize Mr. Treece's book as lacking a dignified and sober appraisal of its subject. Its construction is clumsy, and passages and appendices seem to have been added while it waited for publication. No doubt publishing difficulties have taken their toll. The textual comments are only occasionally very revealing and although the general background is sketched reasonably well, there are many badly written paragraphs, and by the end of the book one feels that Mr. Treece is wondering whether he was wise to have written it. A living subject always provides a multitude

of dangers, and Mr. Treece has avoided the customary dishonesty of the friend only to become trapped into a painful warning that Dylan Thomas may be facing artistic stagnation.

Perhaps the truth of the matter is that Dylan Thomas has come to the end of a particular vein in which Treece had encouraged him and George Barker and W. S. Graham have followed him. It was a vein in which it was difficult to discern which was gold and which dross. Only by comparison with poets such as Stephen Spender could one sometimes see that the veins of gold were really there. Now, in its place is a type of poem such as "Fern Hill" or "A Winter's Tale" where the romantic spirit is expressed with a classic simplicity, and where the poet is surely more than "parochial". One suspects that Mr. Treece has a secret longing for Dylan Thomas to tackle political and philosophical themes. He would like him to be "a leader in thought and behaviour". God forbid!! He is a good minor poet and that is honour enough.

JOHN BAYLISS

Mr. G. S. Fraser's *News from South America* is more than a travel-book; for he was very fortunate in being able to associate with some of the greatest writers of South America, notably Pablo Neruda and the Argentine Jorge Luis Borges. His description of Neruda with his animal simplicity of genius, his innocence and his passion, with the background of his fascinating house with its museum of marine biology, is the best picture of Neruda I have seen. To quote Mr. Fraser "The image of the sea is relevant. The sea that has weighed down, clogged, muddied the words of Neruda's verses is that of familiar experience; there is something churning, heavy and sad about his words, rubbing each other's edges off in his great junkman's bag".

In Jorge Luis Borges, the intellectual, with his "dry, sad, compressed emotions" he sees the opposite, or rather the complement of Neruda. In Neruda a violent elemental force of emotion, "a natural force working out from a centre"; in Borges a man trying to contain the natural forces in himself, and in others.

In his discussion and description of other literary figures (Ricardo Rojas, Victoria Ocampo and the "Sur" group) Mr. Fraser gives a very adequate picture of the problems facing the Latin-American writer; the problem of universality and localism, the problem of subservience to European models and the attempt to evolve a personal manner. And there is a differential element in Latin-American literature difficult as it is to formulate.

G. R. COULTHARD

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

May I, in your columns, pay tribute to a small body of people whose praises go unsung except in the quiet hearts of those who most benefit by the splendid work they are doing. I refer to the Poetry Society Examiners in verse-speaking.

No poet will fail to agree that a good voicing of his verse is vital to its ultimate wide appreciation; and we all know the importance the Society attaches to this side of its work.

That this is proving an ever-growing success is due, in large measure, to these few devoted and hard-working individuals whose names, like Mr. Blunden's *Forefathers*, go "unrecorded, unrenowned".

Every potential verse-speaker must be possessed of an awareness of the beauty which poets crystallise for us, and must accordingly pay the price in being unusually sensitive. The smiling welcome always accorded to them by the Society's Examiners puts them instantly at their ease, before what is a very real ordeal. Their only conscious wish is (or should be) to do justice to the poem which, since they have chosen to perform it, they must love; and none of us can speak of things which are dear to us before an unsympathetic audience.

This same sympathy is evidenced in the *critiques* the Examiners supply, which, since they are always *constructive*, are treasured alike for their correction and their praise.

Yours,
IRENE BRENT.

Sir,

Whether fidelity in verse translations be proper or profitable I will not discuss. Restricting myself to the only points of detail I can disentangle from the welter of images in your reviewer's notice of my English and Latin versions of Rimbaud's poem, I would point out:

1. That in rendering "tohu-bohus" by "hubbub-triumph" I wished to keep to the same number of syllables as in the French word (that Rimbaud may have owed to its use in Baudelaire's "Un Plaisant" in *Le Spleen de Paris*) and to produce a repetition of quaint sounds in some way comparable thereto. I rejected "hurly-burly" as not unusual enough.

2. That, with regard to "vacheries hystériques" and "océans poussifs", I stated in *The Latinity of Rimbaud's Bateau Ivre* (*Durham University Journal*, March, 1940), an offprint of which was sent to *The Poetry Review* with these translations: "The comparison of the wave . . . to 'vacheries hystériques'—it has been suggested to me that the poet may have been thinking of the hills of the Camargue—is not so far from Latin Poetry". Elsewhere in the same essay, in reference to the epithet "poussifs" coming

at the end of the line: "exactly *anhelus* in Virgil's *equis Oriens afflavit anhelis*". The Camargue suggestion, I should add, was Dr. Enid Starkie's, not your reviewer's. Whether "Had strength to muzzle Ocean's wheezy sniffs . . ." (my Latin version is *Oceani nares possent compescere anhelas*), be a good or bad translation of "Pussent forcer le mufle aux Océans poussifs" the words are certainly intended in no "veterinary asthmatic sense". I think, myself, that "hystériques" is used sarcastically here, with a sneer, and that to render it, as your reviewer does in his "running shot", by "stampeding" misses its force, just as the strident cacophony of "on such snorting seas" has not any real relation to the subtle word-music of "aux Océans poussifs".

Yours,

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN.

Sir,

Mr. Brett must be hard to please. He first complains that the Premium Award poems contain no humour, and then proceeds to condemn one of them for having "a comic effect". After this it is a little difficult to accept his contention that the cuckoo is an extinct species.

He does not like too much repetition (which is strange for one so fond of the bird just mentioned), yet in one of the poems he criticises he feels impelled to extend it, despite the fact that his suggested extension would ruin the prosody.

His complaints regarding *Spring Frost* seem to me rather trivial. The objection to the present tense in lines 3, 4 and 5 of stanza 2 is not very well founded. It surely does no great violence to the understanding to accept the word "When" as standing for "At the time when" which, to me at any rate, could justifiably govern a present or past tense after "you should have come". As for "yesterweek", I agree that the word by itself looks and sounds ugly, but that only adds to Andrew Keith's triumph in having introduced it so skilfully that it takes its place in his line most fittingly.

Finally, may I remind Mr. Brett that in his objection to thinking "the sad is inherently poetical" he stands condemned (in almost his own phrase) by a greater than any of us who wrote "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought".

Yours,

EDGAR PROUDMAN.

THE PREMIUM AWARD

My choice for the current competition was most difficult because, by a strange coincidence, so many of the best of the hundred-and-twenty poems submitted were concerned with either Witches or War. This would not have mattered if the spirit expressed in them had been less negative and horrific. Only a great poet can make a convincing and lasting poem out of cynicism and hatred or the macabre. While Shakespeare and Poe were poets of such calibre, I found alas, that even the most brilliant of our competitors were not. Consequently, I have decided to share the prize of £10 equally between Mr. J. B. Parry for "The Letter" and Miss Katherine Andrew for "Rebirth."

Mr. Parry strikes the poetic note in his very first lines and avoids the overworked adjectives of the usual versifier visiting the Orient. Miss Andrew's picture of the woman who "climbs as one possessed" is as consistent as the actual impression would have been to any imaginative spectator of such a figure. May I congratulate both poets on their positive outlook and on their power to express it.

THOMAS MOULT.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

S/Ldr. L. H. Aldridge, Uxbridge.
Patricia Coursey, Somerset.
Jay Roderic de Spain, Florida.
Louise Hercus, Manitoba.
F/Lt. R. W. Lowe, Northern Rhodesia.
Celia Randall, Northern Ireland.

COMMENDED

H. G. Balfour-Paul, Midlothian.
Major John Blanford, Kent.
Sibyl Bristowe, London.
Ellode Collins, London.
Margaret Davies, Chorley Wood.
W. A. B. Gardener, Camberley.
P. A. T. O'Donnell, Cheltenham.
Edith Roseveare, London.
Peter Russell, London.
Jill A. Shaw, Chesterfield.
C. Busby Smith, Gerrards Cross.
N. G. Strong, Kent.
A. V. Stuart, Edinburgh.
Odette Tchernine, London.

THE LETTER

J. B. PARRY

How shall I send you India
Coiled in a hundred hair-sprung words,
Send you the silence and the heat
And the cool clamour of the birds,

Take from the tea-plantation's shade
Knee-deep infinities of green,
Pack the impressions in the dust
Where the slow bullock-carts have been,

Convey the shadows of the palms
Mooncast upon a milky plain
Where midnight sweeps with velvet brush
And bareback rivers dream of rain,

Depict the vulture-ridden sky
And the night licked with jackal's tongue,
Transmit the flies from the bazaar
With smells of frankincense and dung,

And show in monkey, town and tree,
In mosque and temple, tomb and hall,
In sound and silence, then and now,
A grey thread vitalising all?

REBIRTH

KATHERINE ANDREW

She climbs as one possessed
The steep uneven slope,
Cynical, depressed,
Devoid of hope.

Still upwards, unaware
Of the flowers beneath her feet,
Of the wind catching her hair
And whispering to entreat

A frolic, on she strides
Fleeing, with muscles taut
The demon that madly rides
Her own dark thought.

Fleeing the power behind
Her half forgotten fear;
When to her inner mind
A face grows clear

From tangled memories,
And courage flows from above;
Trembling she turns—and sees
The face of love.

The tension breaks like a cloud
Drenching, unrestrained,
And cheeks no longer proud
With tears are stained.

Drooping, her fingers caress
The flowers which pattern the earth,
Convincing her loneliness
Of life's rebirth.

The scent of gorse in the air
Awakens her senses from thrall
She laughs with the wind in her hair
At the curlew's call.

Dimpling features replace
The mask which never smiled,
Delicate radiant grace
Of a wondering child.

Her eyes are delighting anew
In the beauty eternal they see,
Now hope in their living blue
Burns fearlessly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Presentation Fund inaugurated on the occasion of the retirement of Mr. Galloway Kyle, formerly Director of The Poetry Society, will close on 31st October, 1949, and donations will be gratefully received up to that date.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ADULT GOLD MEDAL EXAMINATION

In his remarks at the conclusion of the Adult Gold Medal Examination—The Poetry Society's highest award for verse-speaking, Mr. E. Guy Pertwee said: "We have had a very varied programme tonight, and I think it has been a well chosen programme. One expects in a competition or examination of this description to have work only of the highest order in the way of choice and I think this was done very well tonight: the stress rather came down on Robert Browning, but nobody is to blame for that, for after all, if anyone could write for the voice it was Robert Browning. There are very few poems to-day that do lend themselves to speaking aloud and after all poetry is music and must be spoken aloud. I wish many writers to-day would bear that point in mind instead of being concerned with the intimate details of their own lives of which we know nothing and care even less. You know it has been said that poetry is either a melody or a picture, it often comes heavily on one side or the other. Sometimes it is both, but generally it is one or the other. I do feel that everybody, before they speak a poem must see that picture in their minds and feel the melody of it and above all things, to get into the mood of the poet when he wrote the poem. That has nothing whatever to do with the characterising of the poem—when you hear a lot of nonsense about people speaking lyrical poetry, if they do not use their personality, what have they got to give us. It is a question of adapting the personality to the mood of the poem and never putting up a lot of superficial colour which immediately externalises the whole thing and makes it quite worthless and superficial, that is most important. I always feel if you do that, (I am not talking on the technical side) and then speak the poem naturally and then with a really rhythmical motion, then you will be doing something which is very well worthwhile, and a very artistic thing. I am sure you will agree with me that the speaking of poetry is not the easy thing many people imagine it to be. It is a very beautiful thing and I only wish it could be used in a broader sense in our country to-day."

The successful candidates were Miss Doreen Franklin and Miss Jill Harvie.

THE POETRY HOUR AT 33 PORTMAN SQUARE, W.1.

Friday, October 7th at 6.15 p.m.	*GEOFFREY CHAUCER* A reading arranged and introduced by T. H. Foley.
Friday, October 14th at 6.15 p.m.	*THOMAS HARDY* An illustrated talk by William Kean Seymour.
Friday, October 21st at 6.15 p.m.	*A. E. HOUSMAN* A reading with poems selected by Laurence Housman.

A series of Bilingual Readings of European Poetry will be starting towards the end of October with a special programme for the bi-century of Goethe.

Full details of the programmes will be issued later on.

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE POETRY CENTRE

Oct. 8—3-0 p.m. A talk on *Children in English Poetry* by Dorothy Margaret Stuart. St. Bernard's Convent, High Wycombe.

Nov. 12—2-30 p.m. Reading of a Play to be chosen. Mrs. E. Van den Bergh, Beacon View, Beacon Hill, Penn. 3274.

THE GUILDFORD POETRY CENTRE

Details of the Autumn Meetings may be obtained from The Centre Secretary, Mrs. F. E. Coker, 20 Litchfield Way, Guildford.

THE HAMPSTEAD POETRY CENTRE

The meetings of the Hampstead Poetry Centre will be held on the first and third Thursdays of the month, at 8-9.30 p.m. at 9 Wentworth Mansions, Keats Grove, N.W.3, by invitation of Miss M. H. Huntsman (Hon. Secretary). The next reading will be on 6th October, when we hope to welcome our members and friends.

The following is the programme for this year—1949:

Oct. 6. Poems on "Places, in town or country."
,, 20. Poems by Swinburne.
Nov. 3. Historical Subjects (introduced by Miss M. Burgess).
,, 17. Sonnets and Songs of Shakespeare.
Dec. 1. Milton, including "The Hymn of the Nativity", and other odes and poems.
,, 15. No meeting.

THE REIGATE POETRY CENTRE

Details of the Autumn Meetings may be obtained from the Centre Secretary, Mrs. M. A. Hicks, The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate.

THE ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.) CENTRE

Members and potential members are invited to communicate with H. T. Douglas Robinson, 815 Jackson Street No., St. Petersburg 6, Florida. The centre seeks to promote production of the best in poetry.

THE STROUD POETRY CENTRE

Autumn activities include:

1. The production of a second Stroud Anthology containing Member's work.
2. A William Blake lecture and discussion in October, probably on the 13th.
3. A play-reading, arranged by Miss Millward, on November 10th.
4. A "Competition Evening" in December.

Will anyone able and willing to start a Centre in any part of the country please communicate with the Secretary, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S AUDITIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

The Poetry Society has conducted auditions and examinations in the art of verse-speaking for many years, and its success in this valuable cultural activity is attested by the fact that the number of schools and institutions in all parts of England which the Society examines, continually increases.

Junior preliminary examinations are available for the youngest children and these continue through various grades, up to the final test for adult students, for which the Society's gold medal is the final award for success.

General regulations governing these auditions may be obtained on application to The Registrar, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, with whom arrangements can be made for auditions for schools, colleges, or private individuals.

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITIONS FOR 1949

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of £20 as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed "The Greenwood Prize", 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editor, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review.*

Closing date is 31st December, 1949.

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the offer of £10 in prize money which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3.)
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed "Premium Competition", *The Poetry Review,* 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review.*
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize twice will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 15th November, 1949.

THE HOWARD PARSONS EPIGRAM COMPETITION

The Poetry Society is empowered by Mr. Howard Parsons, a long-standing member of the Society, to offer the following prizes, endowed by him for an Epigram Competition.

1st prize, 5 guineas; 2nd prize, 2 guineas; 3rd prize, 1 guinea. Entries which should not have been previously published should be marked "Epigram" and should not bear a stamped addressed envelope, as MSS. cannot be returned. They should be addressed to The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, to reach here not later than 1st March, 1950. The Society reserves the right to extend the closing date of the competition should none of the entries reach the required standard.

THE POETRY SOCIETY JUNIOR VERSE COMPETITION

The Poetry Society have pleasure in announcing an annual Junior Verse Competition. Schools throughout the country are invited to co-operate in submitting the work of their pupils.

The Competition will be divided into two classes:

(*a*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age up to thirteen years last birthday. There will be a book prize inscribed by the Poetry Society.

(*b*) Not more than one poem, previously unpublished, to be submitted by any one competitor, age from fourteen to seventeen years last birthday. There will be a book prize, inscribed by the Poetry Society and four additional prizes of one year's Membership to the Poetry Society.

The poem may be on any subject. Closing date, 30th June, 1950. Entries to be addressed to: The Junior Verse Competition, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear the names and addresses of competitors and copies should be retained as these cannot be returned.

THE LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS SONNET COMPETITION FOR 1950

The Poetry Society has the pleasure of announcing the fourth Annual Competition in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas for a sonnet upon any subject. One of the two forms adopted by Lord Alfred Douglas in his sonnets, must be used; these are:

For the Octave — 1, 2, 2, 1; 1, 2, 2, 1.

For the Sextet — 3, 4, 5; 3, 4, 5 *or* 3, 4; 3, 4; 3, 4.

The prize of £10 may be divided at the discretion of the adjudicator; the winning poem or poems will be published with the award in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors must retain copies of their poems as these cannot be returned. The sonnets should bear a definite title and not merely marked "Sonnet". Not more than two sonnets may be submitted by each competitor by 30th June, 1950. Address "Sonnet Competition", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Entries should bear names and addresses of competitors. No previously published poem may be entered.

POEMS OF PLACE COMPETITION FOR 1950

Mrs. A. Dorothy Holmes, a Shropshire member of The Poetry Society, offers £10 annually in competition for poems of place. Competitors who must be members of The Poetry Society, may submit not more than two poems, previously unpublished, of not more than 100 lines. All entries should be typewritten and bear the name and address of the author; poems should be addressed to "The Holmes Prize", The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, not later than 1st April, 1950. The judges may divide the prize money at their discretion, and the winning poem or poems may be published in *The Poetry Review*. Competitors are asked to keep copies of their entries as these cannot be returned.

THE POETRY SOCIETY'S CRITICAL SERVICE

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing the continuance of its Critical Service. Two poems only may be submitted for criticism, for a minimum fee of 5s. The charge for the criticism of each additional poem is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.